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Joint Capital Planning Committee (JCPC)
MINUTES
Feb. 16, 2017
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Members present: Douglas Slaughter, Chair, Connie Kruger, Phoebe Hazzard, Alex Lefebvre, Tamson Ely, Katherine Appy, Bernie Kubiak. Staff present: Claire McGinnis, Co-finance Director, Ron Bohonowicz, Facilities Director, Jerry Champagne, Amherst Schools IT and Michael Morris, Superintendent of Schools.

The meeting was called to order at 8:36 a.m. by Chair, Doug Slaughter.

Mr. Slaughter stepped down in his role as Chair during the presentation and discussion of the school's capital requests because he is a school employee. Mr. Kubiak chaired for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Champagne explained that he is attempting to "normalize" Information Technology (IT) purchases by leveling them out across a number of years. Due to an influx of Chromebooks, the number of requested laptops has been reduced by half. There is also a de-emphasis on monitors and printers. The School IT request does include $40,000 for the replacement of the primary storage located in the Middle School because it is 15 years old. The requests include $40,000 for network switches, which are 10-12 years old. He described his other requests in the FY18 capital budget.

Ms. Lefebvre asked if the switches were under warranty and why the switches needed to be replaced now? Mr. Champagne replied that the upgraded switch needed actually costs $50-80,000 and all systems interconnect and come in to the middle school. The Amherst Schools pays 42% of the cost and the Regional Schools and Pelham pay the balance. Ms. Kruger commented that it would be helpful next year if the forms could show this percentage break out so JCPC could know the full cost of items as well as the shared payments.

Mr. Bohonowicz presented the School Buildings and Equipment requested capital budget. He said that transportation was key for both safety and getting kids to school. The request includes a $35,000 new special education van to replace an existing van. He explained that there was $93,000 approved in FY17 for a bus but since the electric bus grant was successful that money was available this year to be put toward replacing the oldest bus in the fleet, which currently has a rejection sticker. Ms. McGinnis said that DOR would definitely approve using the FY17 bus funds for this purpose.

Mr. Kubiak asked if funds were needed for the bus charging station. We were informed that this has already been taken care of.

Mr. Bohonowicz presented information on school capital needs. Wildwood needed new exterior doors. These have been replaced at Fort River and Wildwood is next. Currently the exterior doors are not Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant but the replacement doors will bring them in to compliance. He said automatic door openers were not required by law and were not included in his request. Ms. Kruger suggested that automatic door devices would be a desired expenditure. Mr. Bohonowicz noted this and said he would try to accommodate that in the future. Smart lighting, an initiative with the energy company was also discussed—lights will be put on a computer controlled schedule.

Without funds for a new school building, Wildwood needs new boilers costing approximately $500,000. There was a discussion of which kind of boilers to purchase in light of the current gas moratorium imposed by Berkshire Gas. Natural gas is the preferred option but may not be

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feasible. There are attempts being made to get Berkshire Gas to prioritize schools once new hook ups are allowed. The schools have an agreement with the company to bring in the gas line but the current status of that agreement is unclear.

There is a request for $25,000 for an environmental health assessment of Fort River School. Mr. Morris explained that this study would be essential in determining the costs for remediating any environmental health issues identified. Related to the request for a new elementary school feasibility study, he also explained that if the March 28 referendum vote on funding a new school fails, the soonest we can get back in the queue is 2019 when the MSBA Board meets again, after which it is likely to be a 5-6 year process. He also explained that some residents prefer a 3 elementary school solution and in order to properly evaluate that option the Fort River site needs to be properly studied including options for relocating students during renovation.

There is a request of $10,000 a year for paying for unanticipated emergency repairs to the schools. Ms. Kruger commented that the Town is considering putting these kinds of funds in to the operating budget rather than keeping it in the capital budget. This was discussed last year but not yet implemented.

The discussion of the Amherst Schools capital request was concluded at 10 a.m., at which time Mr. Slaughter resumed his role as Chair.

Other town buildings capital needs were presented and discussed. Ms. Lefebvre asked if the Town's purchase of the gas station site in North Amherst meant that capital funds would be needed to improve the North Amherst Library. The question of whether the Town or the Jones Board of Trustees owned the North Amherst Library ensued. Ms. McGinnis said she would check on this. Currently no capital funds are requested for this building.

Mr. Bohonowicz mentioned the request to properly repair the front steps of Town Hall and to reconfigure the mezzanine for that building. The Bangs Center needs a small amount of exterior brick work and some interior maintenance and repair. He is requesting a new carpet extractor to be shared among town buildings.

The North Amherst School building currently has 3 tenants and needs some interior maintenance work Munson building needs new basement flooring. Mr. Bohonowicz is exploring instituting better controls for one-day rentals of that space.

The minutes of March 10, 2016 were approved and Feb. 2, 2017 was approved as amended.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45.

Documents List:
        FY18 School IT Capital Packet
        FY18 School Facilities Capital Packet
        FY18 Town Facilities Capital Packet
        Minutes of 3/10/2016
        Minutes of 2/2/2017